

2076
The honest and the dishonest
ways of getting WEALTH.

A
SERMON

PREACH'D in the
PARISH-CHURCH
OF
St. Mary le Bow,

On SUNDAY, November 20. 1720.

By SAMUEL Lord Bishop of Carlile.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN WYAT, at the Rose in
St. Paul's Church-yard. MDCCXX.

The book and the
copy of getting W. & W.

STERN

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PROV. XIII. II.

Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour, shall increase.



Might begin my discourse on this Text with those words of our blessed Saviour, with a little variation,

Luke iv. 21.

This day is this

Scripture fulfill'd before your Eyes. The great disorder and confusion which an eager desire of wealth has of late occasion'd amongst us, and the grievous Disappointments which many have met with in the irregular pursuit of it, made me judge this a very proper Subject for our present meditation.

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They are the words of Solomon, the wise King of Israel, concerning the regular and irregular ways of getting wealth, founded upon reason, and probably upon the Experience also which he might have had in divers instances; and having, like many other sayings in this book, no dependance upon what goes before, or follows after them, are to be consider'd by themselves; for the clearer understanding of which, it may not be amiss to observe very briefly, how they are render'd in other translations. In the vulgar *Latin* they are thus render'd, *Substance gotten hastily shall be diminish'd: but that which is gather'd by the hand gradually [by little and little] shall be multiplied.* In the *Septuagint*, thus, *Substance hastily gotten with iniquity is lessen'd: but he that gathereth to himself with godliness shall abound [or shall have his substance multiplied.]* The *Syriac* translation is much to the same purpose, *Wealth gotten by Iniquity shall be diminish'd: but that which is gather'd with justice shall increase.* The *Arabic* reads it thus, *Wealth which is greedily sought with iniquity shall fail: but he that gathereth to himself with good advice,*
his

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his substance shall be multiplied. And to name no more, the Chaldee Paraphrase thus expresses it, Wealth gotten by the iniquity of the possessor shall be diminished: and he that gathereth and giveth to the poor shall multiply his riches. From all these translations compar'd together, we may conclude the plain meaning of *Solomon* in these words to be this, That an eager desire of being hastily rich, which tempts men to the seeking of wealth by false, deceitful, unrighteous and indirect means, regarding themselves only, and not others, is likely to meet with disappointment, if not in attaining the wealth thus sought, yet in its soon failing and wasting away. Whereas on the other hand, the most likely means of attaining such a degree of wealth as is convenient for us, and which we may reasonably hope may continue with us and with our children after us, is the way of Labour and Industry in our respective stations and callings, whilst we walk carefully in the paths of piety towards God, and justice and charity towards men, thus gradually gathering that measure of wealth which is best for us, as the proper recom-

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pence of our being well employed, in business profitable to others as well as to our selves.

In order to the discoursing usefully on this subject, I propose the following method.

I. To shew what degree of wealth a good man, particularly a good Christian, is allowed to desire and seek after.

II. To shew by what means he is allowed to seek it, and is in the fairest way of obtaining and preserving it.

III. To shew farther which are the unlawful and indirect ways of endeavouring to obtain it, and the most unlikely to secure and preserve it.

IV. To make some Application of the whole to our selves.

I. Let us consider, What degree of wealth a good man, particularly a good Christian, is allowed to desire and seek after.

i. Now there can be no question but that such an one may desire and seek after so much as is necessary to supply all his real,
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not imaginary wants, in the station in which Providence hath placed him; but with this condition added, That if it shall please God to remove him to a lower station than that in which he is at present, he shall then be contented with what shall be sufficient for him in these circumstances.

It is fit and good, and God hath wisely so order'd it, that particular men should be placed in different stations, for the benefit of the whole Society of mankind; and it is evident, that what is truly a competency for men in one station, is not so for those in another, to enable them to live comfortably, and to act their parts decently; and therefore the measure of our desires and endeavours after wealth should be taken from the station of life, in which Providence hath thought fit to place us, we being contented with the station in which we find our selves, and with so much as will decently provide for us and our families in it. Not but that, if without our using any irregular methods, and without any inordinate solicitude on our part, it shall please God by his Providence

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dence to open a fair way for us, to better our present station, it will then become reasonable for us to enlarge our desires and endeavours after a Provision proportionable; provided still, as I said before, that if Providence shall depress us to a station lower than that in which we at present are, our desires and endeavours after wealth be always restrain'd within the bounds proper to our condition.

This is highly reasonable in it self, and what our Christian profession certainly obliges us to. *Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content*, saith St. Paul; which words suppose a Christian to be in one of the meanest stations of human life, so as to have no more than *food* to eat, and *raiment* to put on, and even in that state require him to be *content*, not to murmur or repine against Providence on account of his narrow allowance. In like manner the Writer to the *Hebrews* advises, *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have*. It is indeed the great design of Christianity, to make us thoroughly sensible

1 Tim. vi. 8.

Heb. xiii. 5.

ble that our happiness does not consist in any of the enjoyments and possessions of this world, and therefore to raise up our thoughts to things above; to create in us a great indifference to every thing here below; to make us perfectly easy and well satisfied with whatever condition of Life Providence shall assign us; and consequently to teach us not eagerly to desire or seek after any more wealth, than may be a competent, that is, a moderate provision for the station we are in.

But it may be said, Are we then to be stinted just to an allowance sufficient to defray the charges of our particular stations? Is it unlawful consequently for a good Christian to increase his wealth to a greater degree, so that he may be said not only to have what is barely sufficient, but even to abound? as *Solomon* in the Text seems to promise, that *he that gathereth by Labour shall increase*. To this I say in the *second place*,

2. That although no good man, particularly no good Christian ought to extend his desires or endeavours, with solicitude beyond the limits I have mention'd, yet he

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may lawfully *increase* his wealth, and may possibly by degrees come to abound in riches, as a due recompence for extraordinary diligence or uncommon skill in some art, profession, or employment serviceable to the Community of which he is a member, taking care at the same time to be no way injurious to the publick, or to any particular member of the society: that is in other words, Although he should be no farther concern'd, than for *food and raiment* convenient for him, and those that appertain to him, in his present station; yet he may lawfully acquire a greater measure of wealth in the use of lawful means of obtaining it; which brings me to the next general Head which I propos'd, *viz.*

H. To shew by what means he is allow'd to seek such increase of his wealth, and is in the fairest way of obtaining and preserving it.

Now this is plainly mark'd out by *Solomon* in my Text, *He that gathereth by labour shall increase*; where by *Labour* is to be understood, diligence and industry in our lawful and honest Callings, whatsoever they

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they be; the employing the powers and faculties with which God hath indued us, whether of body or mind, to the purposes for which they were bestow'd upon us. Immediately after the fall of our first Parents, God declar'd to *Adam*, and in him to all his Posterity, That in the sweat of his face he should eat his bread, until he should return to the ground

Gem. iii. 19.

out of which he was taken. And although every particular descendant from *Adam* is not appointed to be a Tiller of the ground, or to be engaged in hard bodily labour; yet every man that comes into the world has his proper work assign'd him by the great Lord of all, in doing which he is obliged to exercise proper care and industry, not to live an idle and unprofitable life, but to be constantly employed in some business tending to the benefit of the whole Community in which he lives, and to labour therein with the powers and faculties of his body, or his mind, or both. Had men remain'd in the state of innocence, it cannot be doubted but that they would have had work assign'd them suitable to that state, though with less labour and dif-

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ficulty than since the fall. But since our degenerate Estate *labour* is become more necessary, both to make us humble in a sense of our folly in disobeying our Maker; and that by taking pains in some honest and useful employment, we may be preserv'd from evil courses, and become useful members of the great body of mankind. And this our Christian profession particularly obliges us to. Our Lord

Mark xiii. 34.

compares himself to *a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave Authority to his servants, and to every man his work.* And St. Paul puts

Rom. xii. 15,
&c.

Christians in mind, that *being many they are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another; exhorting them from that consideration to use and improve the gifts bestow'd upon each of them to the benefit of the whole body, admonishing them not to be slothful in business, that is, in any business in which they were properly employ'd, but to be fervent in spirit serving the Lord.*

God hath in great wisdom given variety of abilities to men, suitable to the several stations of life for which he hath design'd them,

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them, that every one keeping his own station, and employing his respective abilities in doing his own work, all might receive advantage. And in truth, the several Employments of human life, and the several Abilities which we have for the discharging them, are to be accounted so many *Talents* committed to our trust, not for our own profit merely, but for the benefit of others also; and whilst we are faithfully and diligently discharging this Trust, it is the proper way for obtaining that competency of wealth which we are seeking, and of increasing it too. This is the natural and the appointed recompence of our *Labour* and diligence in our respective Callings, that whilst we are in our several places promoting the benefit of the whole Body, we shall at the same time reap profit to our selves also, the *Labour* and industry of every other member redounding to our benefit, as much as ours does to theirs, and all together conspiring to the general good. In consequence of which also, if any of us exercise extraordinary diligence, or employ uncommon skill, in the discharge of our part, an extraordinary

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traordinary increase of wealth is the natural, and the just consequence of our so doing.

Nor need we fear the not finding our own account, whilst we are thus performing the duties of our place and station, when we consider, that this is according to the Order which God hath appointed to mankind, which therefore if we duly observe, he will not fail to add his Blessing, which alone can give success to us in the use of our best skill and diligence, accord-

ing to the saying of the wise man, *The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.*

It is the Lord only who can make our industry an effectual means of increasing our wealth; and if we are not wanting on our part, we need not doubt of his giving such success to our industry, as he shall see truly best for us. For this is always to be remember'd, that God hath no where promis'd, to make the best and most faithful of his servants rich in this world. He knows what is fittest for every one of them, and that abundance of wealth would be exceedingly dangerous to some tempers,
and

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and in that case it is from his special favour to them, that he restrains them from great increase. But thus far they may safely depend upon him, that if in their respective stations they do what becomes them, he will not fail to bless them with such increase as he knows to be most proper for them. Whilst they seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness Matt. vi. 33. in the first place, he will certainly add all temporal blessings which he shall see needful and truly good for them.

This therefore is all that I shall add under this Head, That together with our Labour and industry in our several Callings, we take care, according to some of the translations of my Text, to add Piety towards God, together with Justice and Charity towards men; that we gather wealth with godliness, as one of them speaks; with Justice, as another; without iniquity, as others; and lastly, that whilst we are gathering to our selves we also give to the poor, as the Chaldee Paraphrase admonishes. This is the reasonable, the proper, the likely means of gathering and increasing wealth. This is the sure way of

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obtaining the blessing of God, either to *increase* our wealth and *multiply* it, if he shall see that to be good for us; or else, which is better, to deny us that measure of wealth which would endanger our spiritual and eternal welfare. But I proceed to that which I propos'd in the next place, *viz.*

III. To shew which are the unlawful and indirect ways of endeavouring after wealth, and the most unlikely to secure and preserve it to us. And they are such as the wise man points out in those words, *Wealth gotten by vanity.*

Now without question, all wealth gotten by falshood and injustice, by extortion and oppression, by secret fraud or open violence, may be properly said to be *gotten by vanity*, according to the common signification of that word, which in divers of the Translations I have mention'd is render'd by *iniquity*, under which will be comprised all little arts of imposing upon the ignorance and unskilfulness of those with whom we have to do; in a word, whatever is plainly contrary to the known
Rules

rules of truth, justice and equity in traffick and commerce one with another. This will be readily own'd by all that profess to believe the eternal and unalterable difference between moral good and evil, between truth and falshood, right and wrong.

But this is not all that *Solomon* seems to intend here; at least he has set this matter in a view which is not commonly observ'd, his meaning by the word *Vanity* being more extensive, as it stands in this place, than it is ordinarily taken to be, so as to include in it whatsoever methods of getting wealth are opposite to the other way that he here mentions, *of gathering by labour*. He plainly sets these two in opposition one to the other, *getting wealth by vanity*, and *gathering by labour*, condemning one, and approving the other; as if he would intimate, that the only proper method ordain'd by God, and fit for men to use, in order to the increasing their substance, were that of *Labour*, or industry, and that all other methods were ways of *vanity*.

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Not but that an honest man, and a good Christian may fairly *possess* and thankfully *enjoy* wealth, which he himself has not acquir'd by *Labour*, but which it may be has descended to him from his *Ancestors*; or has been freely bestow'd upon him by such as have born particular friendship to him; or has otherwise come into his hands providentially, without any care or *labour* of his own, but at the same time without any the least injury to any particular person, or to the community in general. But that which my Text speaks of, and of which I am now discoursing, is men's *getting* or *gathering to themselves* wealth, or *increasing* what they already have. Now the only way proper for men thus to *acquire* or *increase* their wealth, is, according to the declaration of the wise man, that of *Labour* or Industry in the Station or Calling in which Providence hath placed them, according to the Account I have given of that Matter under my last Head.

And this appears reasonable, because, as I there observ'd, every particular man, by thus exercising his *labour*, industry or skill
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in his proper Station, becomes serviceable to the whole Community, and to every particular Member of it; and it is very fit that he from whom others receive benefit, should at the same time, and by the same means reap profit to himself, as a just recompence of such his care and diligence. Whereas on the contrary, if a man by being negligent or slothful in his proper business becomes useless to others, there can be no Reason why he should expect any such recompence, or why he should reap benefit by the labour of others, who reap none by his: and much more would it be unreasonable for such a Man to increase his own wealth to the prejudice and injury of the Community, or of other private Persons in it.

And it is for this Reason amongst others, that *Gaming* is accounted an unlawful way of *increasing* wealth. I speak not of what is used only for innocent diversion and recreation, without mispending any considerable part of our time or substance; but of *getting* or *increasing* to our selves wealth in that way. Besides the wasting of a great many precious hours of life,

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which ought to be employed to some wise and good purposes ; besides the living in a way below the dictates of Reason, and much beside the end for which men are sent into being ; besides all the other inconveniences and temptations to which Gaming exposes men ; this consideration alone would make it criminal, that men hereby seek to increase their wealth, without having any Title to it by using the proper means appointed by God to that end, and this at the same time to the injury of those that are engaged with them. Men thus employed are not exercising their Skill and Industry in the Stations and Callings allotted to them by Providence, and therefore no recompence can be due to them. Besides that what the one gains, the other certainly loses ; by so much as the one increases his substance, by just so much the substance of the other is diminished ; and no advantage gain'd by either of them to the Community, but real loss, in having its members not employed in any work that redounds to the good of the whole, but mispending that time which ought to be so employed, idly and unprofitably.

fitably. Whereas in the other way of *Labour* and Industry, the man who increaseth his own wealth, helps to increase that of others also, and all together carry on the publick Good. As for Instance, in all lawful trade and commerce, both the honest buyer and seller are well employed, each of them proposing a reasonable gain and advantage to himself, whilst at the same time both of them are promoting the benefit of the whole Society of which they are members. And the same holds true in all other employments fit for the use of reasonable creatures united in one common Body.

Now in like manner as it is in the case of Gaming, so (what I would propose to your serious consideration at this season) every other way, by what name soever it may be call'd, of a private man's increasing his wealth, to the apparent loss and injury of other particular men, or to the detriment of the Community to which he appertains, I take to be an *indirect*, and therefore an *unlawful* way of gaining. If by the way and method in which one man is a gainer, another must necessari-

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ly be a loser ; if the increasing his wealth is manifestly by the diminishing the others, and this without any real desert on the one side, or forfeiture on the other ; and at the same time no way to the advantage, but to the apparent detriment of the Community ; this is a way and method in which I do not see how any good man, and especially how any genuine Christian can allow himself.

How much of this kind has lately been practised amongst us, and to which of the divisions in my Text such gain is to be reduced, that of *gathering by labour*, or *getting by vanity* ; and consequently how far men may reasonably expect to have their *substance increas'd* or *diminish'd* by such practice, I leave to the consideration of those that hear me, not thinking it proper in such a discourse as this, to descend to particulars.

If it be said, Nothing is done in this case but by consent on both sides, the gainer and the loser act voluntarily both alike, and consequently there is no injury done in the case. 'Tis true, they do both act voluntarily ; but it is the very same case

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case in *gaming*, the winner and the loser agree voluntarily to run the hazard ; and yet, as I shew'd before, that may be nevertheless a criminal way of increasing wealth, as I believe all good Casuists will allow. In short, If in these ways *wealth* is gotten by *vanity*, as that stands in opposition to gathering by labour or industry, the wise man here declares that *it shall be diminished*, it has no good foundation, nothing to justify the acquiring it, it is against the Order in which God hath allow'd and directed men to proceed in acquiring what is convenient for them; and consequently what men have reason to expect that the God of Truth and Justice will not prosper, they cannot reasonably ask nor expect that his blessing should attend them, whilst they are taking an indirect way ; but must be forced to acknowledge his righteousness, either in disappointing their endeavours, or in causing *wealth thus gotten* to waste away and be *diminish'd*. But I proceed to what I propos'd in the last place, *viz.*

IV. To

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IV. To make some Application to our selves of what has been said on this Subject.

1. We may observe, from this Maxim laid down in the Text by *Solomon*, the Wisdom and Justice of Almighty God in his dispensations towards the children of men, even in this life, in order to the encouraging Virtue, and the discountenancing Vice. It is true, the great rewards of religion and virtue, and the signal punishments of irreligion and vice, are reserved for the world to come : but even in this present life, the following the Order which God hath appointed in our actions, naturally tends to our worldly prosperity ; and the declining that Order has the same like natural tendency to disappointment and loss. Besides that the special blessing of God is only to be look'd for in the former method, and his blasting our designs and endeavours to be justly fear'd in the latter. What the wise man observes in my Text was certainly true in his time, and has been and will be so in all ages, that generally speaking, *Wealth gotten by*
vanity

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vanity is diminished: whilst he that gathereth by labour increaseth. Whilst Men attend to the Rules which God hath prescribed to them, either by Reason, or by farther Revelation, they are in the way in which they may ask and hope for his blessing: when they lay aside those Rules, ceasing to walk in the plain paths of righteousness, and following their own vain imaginations and contrivances, they cannot have the face to desire him to bless and prosper them, but must rather fear that he would disappoint them in the use of such indirect means.

2. From what I have been discoursing it will appear very fit for every one of us seriously to reflect and impartially to consider with our selves, what part we have had in the late unhappy Management of Affairs amongst us, from whence so many disorders and complaints have arisen; and accordingly what is now our proper Business, what it becomes us, as good Men, and serious Christians, to do in our present circumstances.

I hope there are none here present who have been guilty of knowingly and wil-

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fully contriving to injure their neighbours, and to betray the interest of their Country, in order to the heaping up wealth to themselves. Those that can be guilty of such a Crime, must be so far from deserving the name of Christians, that they are to be reckon'd amongst the vilest and most dishonest part of mankind, and how ever they may fare amongst men, they ought to know and to consider, that they cannot have the least hope of the favour of God, till they have exercised a very deep repentance for their heinous sin, and made all the satisfaction that lies in their power to those who have been injured by them. It is universally allowed, that in case of injury done, full restitution to the best of a man's ability is a necessary part of repentance. It was appointed by the Law of Moses, that not only the *principal* should be restored, but a fifth part added thereunto and given to the person injur'd, before an offering to God could be accepted. And we know that when *Zaccheus* the Publican, who had been employed in an office that often tempted men to injustice and extortion,

Lev. vi. 1, &c.

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profess'd himself a disciple of our Lord, he immediately declares, *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, (and the case is the same in taking any thing by any other injurious methods) I restore him four-fold.* But this I would charitably hope is the case of the smaller number. The greater part, 'tis to be presum'd, have been drawn in ignorantly and unwarily into an irregular traffick, imagining all the while, that they were only taking an opportunity that offer'd it self of getting wealth in an innocent and lawful way, without injuring others, especially since they observ'd so great a number of all sorts of men engag'd in the same practice.

It is wonderful indeed, that the injustice of this way of dealing, which now so evidently appears, should not have been plainly discern'd, and consequently avoided, by all well-dispos'd Persons; and it is not to be doubted, but that the too great love of wealth, too eager a desire of growing rich in haste, very much contributed

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to the blinding the eyes and darkening the understandings of men in this case.

Now of those who have been thus mistakingly engaged, without a direct design of doing wrong, or without considering that they did so, there may be reckon'd three sorts; Those that have gotten great wealth by this method: Those whose substance has been considerably diminish'd thereby: and lastly, such as without considerably increasing or diminishing find themselves in the same condition they were before.

As to these last, I shall only say, that I think it becomes them to repent of their rashness, by which they might have been injurious to others before they were aware; and to be thankful to God, who hath neither suffer'd them to heap up riches to themselves by indirect means, nor to become the unhappy instruments of injuring others, though unwittingly, and without design.

As for those who have been Sufferers by this traffick, (which indeed I take to be the far greater part) I would seriously advise them to beware of murmuring against God,

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God, or their Governors, as too many I fear are apt to do. *Solomon* observes, that the foolishness of man perverts his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord; and the like may be said in the present case, against his earthly Governors too. Men do foolish and wrong things themselves, and then are apt, meeting with disappointment or ill success, to lay the blame upon any rather than upon themselves, even upon Providence it self. But in such a case they are to consider, that the Providence of God is not engaged to save men harmless, whilst they are taking indirect courses. Nor ought they in this case to reflect on their Governors, who propos'd a Method, which if lawfully and honestly managed, might have been for the ease and benefit of the Publick, and no ways injurious to private persons; but which, through the gross mismanagement of designing or unskilful men, has proved very detrimental and injurious to both. They ought therefore to blame their own inconsiderateness and rashness, in suffering themselves to be imposed upon and abused by the wickedness or unskilful-

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skilfulness of other men; they ought to be humble in consideration of their own too eager desire of wealth, which expos'd them to this rashness; they ought, in a word, patiently to submit to the Providence of God, which permitted this calamity to befall them in the use of indirect means, and to make a good use of it to their spiritual advantage, *viz.* to take off their hearts from an inordinate regard to the wealth of this world, and to place them upon more desirable and more durable treasures.

As for those, in the last place, who have *inordinately increas'd their substance* by these means, even although they did not directly design the injuring others, yet since it manifestly proves to have had that effect, if they would take my Advice, it should be, to search out those who have been the unwary sufferers in the present Calamity, and out of their own Overplus to supply their wants. This I am verily perswaded would be the best means towards the satisfaction of their own minds, when they shall come seriously to reflect upon what they have done, and
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yield them more true pleasure than the enjoyment of their wealth could do: and by thus separating what they have gotten by vanity, they might the better secure to themselves and their families what they before obtain'd in the way of *Labour* and *Industry*, or what they possessed by any other regular and lawful means. I am very sensible, that the advice which I have in this last case propos'd will be thought severe, and by those who act only by the maxims and opinions of the children of this world, may be despis'd: but I judg'd it my duty to speak my mind freely to you who are under my particular care, in a Case which I apprehend to be of so great importance, and wherein so many Persons are concern'd.

3. From the Doctrine I have been insisting upon, and our own experience of the truth of it, we should be instructed to mortify in our selves all inordinate desires of worldly wealth, that so we may never be tempted to take any irregular and indirect courses to acquire it.

It cannot be doubted, but that this has been the unhappy source of the calamities
now

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now complain'd of, An eager desire of being hastily rich; which has tempted some to use means that they knew to be unjust, and others too rashly and inconsiderately to fall into the snare; whereas there is no vice that the holy Scriptures do more particularly warn us to beware of, than that of covetousness, or the inordinate desire of riches.

A faithful man shall abound with blessings, saith Solomon: but he that maketh haste to be rich, shall not be innocent.

And again, *He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.*

Take heed, and beware of covetousness, is the admonition of our Lord himself,

and that for this very good reason, *that a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.* Abundance is not necessary either to the life, or to the happiness of a man, nay very frequently it creates great disquiet and uneasiness to him. Besides the folly of trusting in

uncertain riches, as the Apostle styles them. Labour not to be rich, saith Solomon; cease from

things

Prov. xxviii.

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Verse 22.

Luke xii. 15.

1 Tim. vi. 17.

Prov. xxiii. 4, 5.

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thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away, as an eagle towards heaven. Especially if gotten by vanity, they shall be diminished, as my Text declares. But beyond all this, they are very apt to debase the soul of the man, to tempt him to pride and self-confidence, to falshood and injustice, to render him forgetful of his spiritual concerns, to turn away his heart from regarding his main interest, and finally to endanger his exclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven. Hear how St. Paul declares the great danger of loving and desiring riches. They that will be rich

1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have err'd from the faith, and pierc'd themselves through with many sorrows. (Words which

have been sadly verify'd in our days.) And it is in opposition to this temper, that he makes it to be the measure of a Christian's desires (as I took notice before)

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¹ Tim. vi. 7, 8. that *having food and raiment he should be therewith content*; forasmuch as *we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*

What will the greatest degree of wealth avail any of us, when we come to take our leave of the world? What profit, what satisfaction will it yield us at the hour of death? And how near that hour may be, we know not. Even whilst we are heaping up riches in this world, and rejoycing in them, it may be on a sudden

Luke xii. 20, 21. said to any of us, *Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be requi-*

red of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? Upon which our Lord immediately adds, *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.* Such will be the surprize, such the misery of every one, who by treasuring up wealth in this present state, has been diverted from making timely provision for a future life. It is an awakening Admonition that of our blessed Saviour, and that which is enough to strike the hearts of rich men with fear and trembling.

Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly

ways of getting Wealth. 35

hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, That it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Upon which, when the disciples were exceedingly amazed, and said, Who then can be saved? Our Lord did indeed a little soften the seeming hardness of the expression, but still intimating, that without an extraordinary measure of grace it could not be otherwise, *With men this is impossible: but with God all things are possible.*

Matth. xix.

23, 24, 25,

26-1

And who, after this, that seeks and hopes for the *the kingdom of heaven*, would be eager in his desires or pursuits after riches? What disciple of Christ, who reads these words of his Lord, and verily believes them to be true, would not be afraid of becoming rich, and rather chuse to take up with *food and raiment*, than to put his eternal salvation into so apparent hazard?

4. In the last place, we should be instructed from this Doctrine to lay up our Treasure in Heaven, where only *true Riches* are to be found, that, according to

36 *The honest and the dishonest*

our blessed Saviour's Admonition, *our hearts may be there also.* Our hearts

Matth. vi. 19,
20, 21.

will necessarily be, where our treasure is ; so that the only sure

way to preserve us from the inordinate love of the riches of this world, is to place our affections on the possessions of a future life, which are infinitely more desirable. If indeed this Earth were to be the place of our perpetual abode, it would be requisite that we should carefully furnish our selves with provision accordingly : but if when we cease to live any longer here, our immortal Spirits will continue their duration in another State, and that duration shall be without end, then our chief concern must be to provide for our everlasting abode, making sure of a Treasure that will never fail.

What the Possessions and Enjoyments of the heavenly State will be, we cannot, whilst we are here below, be thoroughly apprised of. *Eye hath not seen,*

1 Cor. ii. 9.

nor ear heard, neither have enter'd into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. This we are assured, that they are such as

will

ways of getting Wealth. 37

will be perfectly satisfactory to the Possessors, and as durable as their beings, such as will not decay of themselves, nor be liable to be corrupted or taken away from them. Lay up for your selves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. It is an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserv'd in heaven for us, as St. Peter styles it. In a word, It is an inheritance reserved for those who shall be accounted worthy to be called the children of God, to be given freely to them, and settled for ever upon them by their heavenly father.

Weak and foolish creatures that we are! we can be here pursuing with great eagerness and solicitude, that which in a very few years at the farthest, we know not how soon, will be altogether unprofitable and insignificant to us, whilst we neglect and hazard this glorious and everlasting Inheritance! One would be apt to think on the other hand, that the prospect and hopes of it, should render us wholly careless and indifferent, as to all our earthly posses-

38. *The honest and the dishonest*

Possessions, that no Christian should be found looking after any more than the necessities and common conveniencies of this present life, much less heaping up riches without measure, and without end, to the endangering his immortal well-being. And thus it would be with us, if we entertain'd a firm and unshaken belief, and a constant sense of the vast difference between this our present state, and that which is future.

This therefore is our business, to get our faith well fix'd and settled with respect to that eternal state of happiness which we profess to hope for; to meditate frequently and seriously on the vanity and uncertainty of all our earthly enjoyments, and of the reality and certainty of those which we expect hereafter, according to the expression of St. Paul,

2 Cor. iv. 18.

Looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, considering that the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. Finally, Let us secure to our selves a treasure in heaven, by all Acts of Piety, Justice, and

ways of getting Wealth. 39

and Charity, by acquiring all those good dispositions of soul, which will qualify us for the enjoyments of the heavenly state; by seeking first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and in the faithful discharge of the duties of our several stations, leaving it to God to add to us all other things as he shall know to be most expedient for us.

God grant we may all of us have Wisdom and Grace thus to pursue our own true happiness, and by his mercy to obtain it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



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it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

